

CLAIMS:

1. A method of coding a multi-media object, the method comprising the steps of:
coding the object to obtain a bit-stream, and
adding quality information to the bit-stream, which quality information
indicates a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-
stream.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coding step is a scalable coding
step to obtain a scalable bit-stream.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the quality information relates to
an object reproduction quality.

4. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the quality information is based on a
signal to noise ratio value.

5. A method as claimed in any of the preceding claims, wherein quality tags are
added at given locations in the bit-stream, indicating a quality of the object when the bit-
stream is truncated just after (or alternatively just before) the given location in the bit-stream.

6. A method as claimed in claims 1, wherein the quality information is
incorporated in existing fields of a given scalable coding standard.

7. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the scalable bit-stream includes
several layers and wherein respective layers include respective quality information.

8. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the bit-stream is encrypted and the
quality information is unencrypted.

9. A method of controlling at least one bit-stream representing a multi-media object in which bit-stream quality information has been added, the quality information indicating a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-stream, the method comprising the steps of:

5 receiving the at least one bit-stream,
extracting the quality information from the bit-stream,
transcoding or truncating the at least one bit-stream in the case a desired combination of bit-rate and quality of the at least one bit-stream differs from a current combination of bit-rate and quality of the at least one received bit-stream,
10 providing the at least one bit-stream at the desired combination of bit-rate and quality.

10. A method of transmitting at least one multi-media object, the method comprising the steps of:

15 coding the object to obtain a bit-stream,
adding quality information to the bit-stream, which quality information indicates a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-stream, and
20 transmitting the bit-stream in which the quality information has been added.

11. A method of receiving at least one bit-stream representing a multi-media object in which bit-stream quality information has been added, the quality information indicating a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-stream, the method comprising the steps of:

25 extracting the quality information from the bit-stream,
transcoding or truncating the at least one bit-stream in the case a desired combination of bit-rate and quality of the at least one bit-stream differs from a current combination of bit-rate and quality of the at least one received bit-stream,
30 providing the at least one bit-stream at the desired combination of bit-rate and quality, and
decoding the at least one bit-stream at the desired combination of bit-rate and quality.

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12. A method of receiving at least one bit-stream representing a multi-media object in which bit-stream quality information has been added, the quality information indicating a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-stream, the method comprising the steps of:

5 extracting the quality information from the bit-stream;
 decoding the bit-stream to obtain a decoded multi-media object; and
 processing the multi-media object in dependence on the extracted quality.

13. A device of coding a multi-media object, the device comprising:
10 means for coding the object to obtain a bit-stream, and
 means for adding quality information to the bit-stream, which quality information indicates a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-stream.

14. A transmitter comprising a device as claimed in claim 13.

15. A controller for controlling at least one bit-stream representing a multi-media object in which bit-stream quality information has been added, the quality information indicating a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-stream, the controller comprising:

20 means for receiving the at least one bit-stream,
 means for extracting the quality information from the bit-stream,
 means for truncating the at least one bit-stream in the case a desired combination of bit-rate and quality of the at least one bit-stream differs from a current
25 combination of bit-rate and quality of the at least one received bit-stream,
 means for providing the at least one bit-stream at the desired combination of bit-rate and quality.

16. A receiver comprising a controller as claimed in claim 15.

30 17. A receiver for receiving at least one bit-stream representing a multi-media object in which bit-stream quality information has been added, the quality information indicating a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-stream, the receiver comprising:

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means for extracting the quality information from the bit-stream;
means for decoding the bit-stream to obtain a decoded multi-media object; and
means for processing the multi-media object in dependence on the extracted
quality.

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18. A multiplexer or network node comprising a controller as claimed in claim 15.
19. A bit-stream representing a multi-media object in which bit-stream quality information has been added, the quality information indicating a quality of the object in relation to a given position in (or a given part of) the bit-stream
- 10 20. A storage medium on which a signal as claimed in claim 19 has been stored.